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ABSTRACT

A compilation of readings by professional educators on aspects of the Continuing Education Unit, a new measurement concept for noncredit continuing education, is given. An Interim Statement of The National Task Force to Study the Feasibility and Implementation of a Uniform Unit for the Measurement of Non-Credit Continuing Education Programs is presented. This statement resulted from a conference held in Washington, D. C. in July, 1968, with thirty-four organizations interested in identifying, measuring, and recognizing effort in continuing education participating. These organizations are listed. (NF)

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The Continuing Education Unit

a compilation of selected readings

"One continuing education unit is
TEN CONTACT HOURS OF PARTICIPATION
in an organized continuing education experience
under responsible sponsorship, capable direction
and qualified instruction."

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

A COMPILATION OF SELECTED READINGS

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Louis E. Phillips, Editor

July 1972

FOREWORD

Early in 1968 the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the U.S. Office of Education, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the National University Extension Association sponsored a national planning conference to study the feasibility of defining a uniform unit of measurement for noncredit continuing education. This conference was held in Washington, D.C., July 1 and 2, 1968, with thirty-four organizations represented as listed in Appendix B. These organizations were known previously to have expressed an interest in one aspect or another of identifying, measuring, and recognizing effort in continuing education.

On December 1, 1971, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools adopted a revised Standard Nine, Special Activities. This Standard specified that the Continuing Education Unit shall be used as the standard unit of measure for participation in noncredit continuing education activities. This action by the Southern Association was the first by a regional accrediting commission to require the use of the CEU for institutions of higher education.

The University System of Georgia immediately began to devise a plan of implementation for the CEU. This plan, which becomes effective July 1, 1972, was adopted for all 27 University System institutions in April 1972. The Georgia Plan represents the first state-wide adoption of the CEU by a system of higher education. An analysis of this plan reveals a document which exceeds the normal implementation of the CEU, by offering additional statistical and managerial data for each institution as well as a comprehensive analysis of continuing education on a system-wide basis.

Professional educators must be concerned both with the production and consumption aspects of this new measurement concept. An understanding of the philosophical aspects as well as the practical benefits is essential as both producers and consumers establish criteria for its adoption. The limited information on the CEU has slowed the pace of adoption as well as the necessary feedback currently being solicited by the Task Force as it strives to prepare a national set of guidelines. This compilation of readings is offered to hasten the understanding and adoption of this vital element of continuing education.

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT
A NEW TOOL FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

By Keith E. Glancy

One recent estimate of the number of Americans involved in adult and continuing education each year was 25 million. Other guesstimates are not so conservative. While a few million individuals are taking credit courses in the evening or by correspondence, more millions are taking informal, noncredit classes, or are participating in a variety of other credit-free educational activities. These may range from an evening class on fly tying to an intensive two-day session on the techniques of treating heart disease. A portion of these millions of individuals would like a record of their accomplishment, or at least of their participation, even though such educational effort is not applicable toward a formal degree.

With increased emphasis on continuing education as a requirement for maintaining professional viability, the problem of recording the participation of each individual is receiving more attention. The same problem exists at the other end of the educational continuum. Paraprofessionals are required to participate in noncredit training to qualify for entry positions. An official record of this basic educational activity usually is not available to the individual.

These are but two elements of a problem which has occupied the attention of a task force for the past two years. The need for a standard unit for recording and reporting continuing and adult education activities is of concern to such diverse groups as the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the American Medical Association, the American Management Association, the U.S. Office of Education, the United Auto Workers and the National University Extension Association, to cite but a few.

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"The Continuing Education Unit: A New Tool for Adult Educators" appeared in the May, 1971 edition of Adult Leadership, pages 10-12, 35, 38. (Reprinted by permission of the Adult Education Association of the USA.)

Growing out of an exploratory meeting in July, 1968, a National Task Force[1] under the chairmanship of Dr. William L. Turner,[2] North Carolina State University, was assigned the problem of recommending a unit to measure and recognize participation in noncredit education and to develop procedures for its implementation. During the next two years the Task Force met periodically to develop definitions, recommendations and procedures. A progress report released in the spring of 1970 provided a tentative definition for the recommended unit called a continuing education unit or a c.e. unit. (See Interim Statement)

The C.E. Unit

The Task Force defined the c.e. unit as ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction and qualified instruction. While the unit is based on a sufficiently small amount of participation to be viable, it has the advantage of being easily computed and recorded for all formats and durations of adult and continuing education for which contact instructional hours can be calculated.

An evening class which meets two hours each Tuesday evening for ten weeks is easily assigned two c.e. units. A five-day intensive course requires a survey of the schedule to determine the number of instructional hours involved. Discounting the time for registration, coffee breaks, leaving early on Friday, and including any formal evening sessions results in a total of about thirty instructional hours, again easily transferrable to three c.e. units. A three-day course, however, may involve 17 instructional hours, more than enough for one unit, but not quite enough for two. The easy and obvious solution is to award 1.7 units, an acceptable solution. Since we are dealing with informal instruction, any division involving less than one hour of instructional time should not be required. The Task Force would discourage any further subdivision of units.

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[1]See Appendix A

[2]Copies of "An Interim Statement on the National Task Force" may be obtained from the National University Extension Association, Suite 360, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036.

In addition to defining the c.e. unit, the Task Force suggested several operating procedures which should be followed by an institution wishing to award units to participants in its programs. A major consideration in this statement is the necessity for establishing and maintaining permanent records for each individual participant who is awarded c.e. units so an official report or transcript can be supplied on the same basis that a transcript of high school or college credits is provided. The necessity for maintaining permanent records will eliminate most adult educational activities except those which are institutionally based or are long range training programs. The need for permanent records also encourages adult educators to award units only to participants in the more significant educational activities. Fly tying might not be awarded c.e. units, but the course on the treatment of heart disease would receive recognition by most institutions.

While the Task Force spent many hours trying to analyze the problems to be encountered when applying the c.e. unit in actual practice, it soon became evident that the definition of the unit as well as the suggested administrative procedures would have to be put to the acid test. They must be tried in an operational situation. Since the member institutions of the National University Extension Association offer a wide variety of noncredit continuing education, an invitation was issued to the Executive Committee of the Division of Conferences and Institutes of NUEA for volunteers to participate in a pilot project. Representatives from fifteen institutions immediately indicated their interest.

An orientation session held in Washington, D.C., during the summer of 1970 was attended by representatives of more than twenty institutions. No attempt was made to inform all members of NUEA or to involve members of other associations at that time since only a limited number of institutions could be coordinated in the pilot project. Finally, eighteen institutions[3]

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[3]The following institutions participated in the pilot project: UCLA, Florida, Florida A & M, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri-Rolla, New Hampshire, North Carolina State, Rutgers, Syracuse, Washington of St. Louis, Wayne State, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and the University Center for Adult Education in Detroit. Additional institutions later indicated an interest and may submit reports to the Task Force.

agreed to participate, to keep permanent records, and to provide information reports to the National Task Force. The institutions operating the pilot projects tested the application of the c.e. unit to their continuing education programs and the coordinators submitted reports on each of the classes, courses, conferences, workshops and other activities to which c.e. units were awarded during the 1970-71 academic year.

During 1971, these reports, along with the reactions of the coordinators, staff and students involved in the pilot projects, will be reviewed and analyzed. The coordinators will also meet as a group with representatives of the National Task Force and discuss their reactions to the pilot applications of the c.e. unit and will make recommendations concerning any changes or adjustments needed. If a generally favorable reaction is received from the operation of the pilot projects, a revised report will be prepared by the Task Force for release late in 1971.

Why It is Needed

What precipitated this long series of events? Why was it important to develop a unit to measure informal and noncredit educational activities?

Evidence of the need for a uniform unit came from several different sources, and the following examples will illustrate the variety of organizations which have an interest in the recognition and recording of continuing education activities.

Perhaps the greatest impetus came from the U.S. Office of Education where a representative from what is now the National Center for Educational Statistics was appalled by the inconsistency and inaccuracy of available data on adult and continuing education. The only common unit currently used for reporting is the number in equating such extremes as attendance at one session of a concert series with participation in a six-week intensive short course. The ratio of time of involvement by the individual participants is on the order of 1:100. The same participants appear in USOE data on a one-to-one basis. Accurate interpretation of such data is impractical, if not impossible. Thus the idea of a standard unit which could give weight to various types of adult education activity and provide a uniform basis for reporting evoked considerable interest. Adoption of a standard unit provides hope for more valid statistical data on adult education in the future.

Adoption of the c.e. unit can be helpful in fiscal planning in departments of extension and continuing education. It is difficult to relate funding to quantity in continuing education. Using units as a measure of quantity will provide understandable and uniform reporting and will give comparable data from year to year. Better planning and budgeting is then possible, and justification is easier. Data accumulated for use at the institutional level are the same needed to compile national statistics.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of evening classes, short courses and intensive courses are offered by engineering and technical schools to maintain the competency and viability of today's engineers and scientists. New methods and techniques as well as new materials and processes require constant updating in most technical fields. Technical competence of a high level in a very specialized area can be, and very often is, acquired through continuing education instruction. Institutions continually receive requests from individual participants for a report of the courses which have been completed. Because of this demand, several schools have been pushed into developing their own individual unit system. Both UCLA and Wisconsin have long awarded engineering units and have kept records for the benefit of their program participants.

The Engineers Council for Professional Development, as well as committees within other major engineering societies are fully aware of this development and in the past few years have devoted increasing attention to continuing engineering education. The proposal for a standard unit is receiving serious consideration in these discussions.

The American Medical Association has approved a Certificate of Continuing Education for its members which requires a specified amount of continuing education and self-improvement over a three-year period. The requirements are spelled out in great detail. The certificate must be renewed each three-year period; it is not an indefinite award. AMA is interested in a unit of measurement which will simplify both the statement of requirements and also the necessary record keeping for such a major program.

Other professional organizations are developing similar requirements for their members, either as awards for further study or to fulfill requirements for continued membership. Each is interested in a system which will simplify the process of reporting and recording continuing education activity for substantial numbers of its members.

A standard unit can also be useful in the recording of educational activities of paraprofessionals and others who are required to complete a minimum training program to qualify for job entry. Currently much of the training at this level is done in packaged programs and a report on the individual is submitted to the agency involved upon the completion of the package. Usually this report remains in the agency file, not available to the individual if he needs it to prove his qualifications for another position, especially if it is with another organization. Likewise, the institution offering the training ordinarily does not maintain such records on a permanent basis.

Such casual record keeping does not encourage long-range planning to meet major educational objectives. Neither does it encourage the planning of long-range sequential training for persons involved in subprofessional activities unless such training is planned on a college-credit basis. A standard unit recorded permanently would afford the individual as well as the institution an opportunity to plan educational steps from one level of competency to another, with the process extending over a period of several years.

Union contracts in the auto industry have omitted noncredit courses from tuition refund clauses because of the difficulty of interpreting and administering such programs. A uniform unit which could define the amount and provide for classification would assist in the administration of these tuition refund programs and would be more readily acceptable as a contract item. In the chemical industry, on the other hand, only 9 of 45 companies do not have a clause including noncredit education in their tuition refund provisions, but a uniform unit would assist in the efficient administration of these programs also.

Organizations other than high schools, colleges and universities are considering seriously the application of the c.e. unit to their own educational activities. The U.S. Civil Service Commission, for instance, provides training programs for more than 70,000 government employees each year. While reports are submitted for each course to the departmental sponsor, it is difficult to maintain consolidated records for an individual who participates in more than one course. The Commission applied the concept of the c.e. unit to the data already on file and found that actual application would be feasible with only minor administrative adjustments.

The American Management Association also offers a wide variety of short courses each year and is investigating the advisability of developing a permanent record system using the c.e. unit as a reporting and recording tool.

Protecting the Value of the Unit

As these last two examples make clear, the c.e. unit was designed not as an end in itself, but as a tool for adult educators. The National Task Force did not limit the projected application of the unit to colleges and universities. At this point the question most often asked is, "If everyone can award c.e. units, will they have any value at all?" In certain instances their value could be lost, but as with other commodities, people who constantly use a product soon learn the quality of the various brands. Units applicable to medical continuing education will be acceptable only from certain institutions, and then only after the AMA has satisfied itself that the program meets its own criteria for quality. ECPD undoubtedly will have an impact on which engineering programs are considered in evaluating the continuing education record of an engineer. The same will be true of many other professional groups, and may even hold true for the paraprofessional programs, especially when state licensing is the objective. In that case, a state agency will determine which programs are acceptable.

Beyond these outside controls is the fact that most existing programs are offered as an adjunct activity of a larger organization. The reputation of the institution or the organization will substantiate the quality of the units recorded. These institutions will maintain a reasonably consistent basis on which they award c.e. units. While unreasonable proliferation of organizations and institutions offering units may theoretically become a major problem, in actual practice it is doubtful that it will ever become more than a minor nuisance.

The fact that so many different institutions and organizations are interested in applying the c.e. unit indicates clearly that a standard unit is needed. Several units have already been developed, in fact, and several more are being considered. Each is applicable to a specific situation or institution, and each is slightly, or even greatly, different in definition and concept. Before too many varieties of units are developed and the change to a nationally recognized standard unit becomes even more difficult, a unit applicable to most situations and acceptable on a national basis must be developed. This is the objective of the National Task Force.

Consideration was given to the possibility of setting up a national record center to act as a depository for all c.e. units. Each institution would report all c.e. units awarded for its programs to the center. An individual then could obtain a record of all of his continuing education activity from one source, regardless of the number of institutions he might have attended over how many years. Theoretically, such a system might work very well, and it might become self-financing with sufficient activity. The immediate practical problems of establishing such a center, however, were greater than the Task Force was in a position to solve. For the present, record keeping for the unit will be the responsibility of the organization or institution awarding c.e. units.

One major problem, however, continues to be a topic for discussion at Task Force meetings. What method or system can be used to indicate the level of presentation of the continuing education and the quality of the individual's participation? Answers to the two parts of this question do not come easily. A very broad gauge measure of academic level or difficulty is being tested, using as a basis for comparison the academic levels in our schools -- elementary, secondary, junior college, upper division undergraduate, and graduate. Even with descriptive phrases to assist, it is not easy to classify all continuing education activities into one of these categories. Some general division of level of presentation, however, can be useful.

A similar problem is faced in trying to determine the quality of the student's participation. A formal grade in a class would provide a solution, but grades are seldom given in continuing education. Most programs, in fact, expect only attendance and general participation. Even certifying to an individual's attendance becomes a serious problem because instructors in noncredit continuing education are seldom required to take roll. Whether workable operating procedures can be developed to provide a partial answer to these questions remains to be seen. The pilot projects may give some suggested solutions to the Task Force.

With the emphasis now being placed on continuing education and with such activity being distributed over the forty or more productive years of a person's life, the need for a standard unit of recognition to be entered on a permanent record becomes very apparent. The immediate goal of providing formal recognition to the individual for his efforts in gaining additional education certainly is, in itself, worth the time and trouble of developing the c.e. unit. The greatest impact, however, may well be the enormous increase in continuing education generated through the

development of continuity within programs and the encouragement of long-range planning to provide more complex sequential continuing education. Glimpses of such possibilities keep the National Task Force and the pilot project coordinators enthusiastic about the potential of the c.e. unit.

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

Remarks by Paul J. Grogan, Professor of Engineering, University Extension, The University of Wisconsin, before the Sixth Annual Meeting, CES Division, American Society for Engineering Education, Statler Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts, Nov. 5, 1971. Reprinted in the ASEE Monographs, Continuing Education Studies Series, No. 6, 1972. (Reprinted by permission of the American Society for Engineering.)

Background and Basic Definitions

A task force authorized by an ad hoc National Planning Conference on the topic of this particular discussion recommended some time ago "that a uniform system be adopted for measuring and recognizing individual participation in continuing education." The recommendation of the task force was twofold and essentially as restated below in fundamental and simple terms:

1. Any post-secondary level educational experience that does not contribute toward a diploma, a degree, a journeyman's skill or a licensable proficiency may be defined as continuing education. This may be done as the sponsor's option without regard to format, content, level or audience served by the offering.

2. The accumulation of learning experiences by individuals through such sponsored programs may be measured and recognized in terms of continuing education units. Such units derive from ten hours' participation in an organized learning activity that is offered by a clearly identifiable sponsor of continuing education and is carried out under competent course direction and instruction.

These two thoughts--one which is a mere extension of the other--serve first to define the entity known as continuing education and then proceed to establish the uniform standard for its measure. It is just as simple as the basic entity known as length being expressed

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Sponsors of the National Planning Conference, Washington, D.C., July 1-2, 1968, were: National University Extension Association, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, U.S. Civil Service Commission, U.S. Office of Education, HEW.

in units of feet that comprise 12 inches. Any other unit of length would be just as logical. Indeed, there are many different units used for that purpose.

Note, however, that the continuing education unit is decimally related to the instructional hour, the most common module of educational experience. This simple convention should prove to be a great convenience when assigning the appropriate number of continuing education units to representative continuing education, learning experiences, regardless of length or format.

The task force also recommended that the design of sequences of noncredit learning experiences that lead to the recognition of individual participation in continuing education be a responsibility of the so-called user groups rather than the immediate sponsors of courses or sequences. User groups include the various professions, the several fields of study within each profession, the large number of technical societies and associations that are organized around a community of interests, licensing boards and commissions, employers, peer groups, civic and community organizations, etc. The logic behind this decision to defer to the respective judgments of user groups in establishing the criteria for recognition is discussed below.

Rationale for the Universal Use of "q"

This is an age of great dependence upon lifelong learning and the dedicated pursuit of self-renewal whether these educational objectives are carried out on the job or exclusively within a profession. The greatest rationale for the newly emergent continuing education unit (c.e.u. or "q") is the ease and universality with which it may be applied to existing programs of continuing education. The mere quantification of the knowledge transfer associated with a continuing education learning experience applies equally well to all such programs although they may be as varied in their tradition and accomplishment as they are broad in their choice of subjects and variety of formats.

It may be said further in defense of the c.e.u. that it is easily and immediately capable of being applied at any recognizable level of continuing education. The lower threshold begins, by virtue of the definition of continuing education given in the opening paragraph, with post-secondary education. This level of education is broadly applicable to large numbers of people. At the other limit of the continuing education spectrum, c.e.u. may be applied with corresponding appropriateness and effectiveness to post-doctoral participation in highly specialized and individualized professional learning experiences.

The Determination of "q"

The c.e.u. also applies equally well for all formats of continuing education as long as there is a legitimate sponsor and a knowledgeable and responsible person associated with the organization and conduct of the learning experience. The system of measurement and recognition that follows depends upon the skill and dedication of each responsible person to establish the appropriate number of c.e.u. to be attached to the program he conducts. He alone is most intimately aware of the scope, format, content, participation and other forms of student evaluation and exposure in any informal mode of learning. From this background of information, he must decide upon the equivalent number of instructional hours required in a conventional classroom situation to achieve the same general degree of knowledge transfer.

This task need be neither as difficult nor as uncertain as it may seem at first encounter. Experienced educators surely have the ability to judge the general amount of educational content associated with a typical recitation period or its multiple in terms of a standard quarter-hour or a semester-hour of credit. He is merely asked to apply this same judgmental skill when determining the education content of his continuing education program, as measured in c.e.u., regardless of the quality of the independent variables of level and format.

As with levels and format, the c.e.u. is also completely universal with respect to both the range of the instructional content and the qualifications of the user group for whom the experience is intended. Questions concerning the great degree of varability tolerated among c.e.u. as influenced by the several educational parameters of level, scope, content, format and audience tend to wash out or answer themselves once the units are applied for recognition purposes. This derives from the fact that "the utility of the c.e.u. lies wholly in the eyes of the beholder."

This ability to serve all levels, contents, formats, and audiences is not particularly unique to the c.e.u. Indeed not, for the familiar concept of credit--whether applied to elementary, secondary, undergraduate or graduate education--has long enjoyed similar universality in these several respects. Thus, there are more parallels and precedents with respect to the adoption and use of c.e.u. than one first imagines.

Multiple Sources of Sponsorship

The system of c.e.u. as recommended by the task force permits a further innovation in the interest of learning by permitting a great degree of latitude with respect to its sponsorship and subsequent award. Opportunity is afforded for participation by a vast array of recognizable and acceptable sources of sponsorship of continuing education that are outside of academia. Thus, the prospect exists for c.e.u. to be available through such varied sources as: publicly and privately supported institutions of higher education, proprietary schools of various levels and types, the recently evolving learning or knowledge industry, hired consultants or instructional staffs in programs sponsored by various organizations, professional cadres engaged in educational programming on a free-lance basis, in-service training and on-the-job instruction, in-plant programs as taught by others, self-taught experiences that can be reasonably and properly evaluated by a willing sponsor, the educational committee activities of associations, professions and technical societies, etc. It may be reasonably expected that each of these sponsors carries out a program of continuing education in response to his own constituency, mission or objectives.

Evaluation (Accreditation) Vested with Users

The c.e.u. may appear to be so universally available and applicable that it could be in danger of losing all of its intended meaning before it can possibly gain wide acceptance and use. However, the next major innovative feature believed to be pecularily applicable with respect to the c.e.u. is that it is intended to have merit or utility only in such instances that it meets the needs or specification of a particular user group. Each potential user group thus views the c.e.u. for purposes of determining whether or not it serves the needs of its own clientele. The learning experience may serve either the purpose of advancing the level of general education or in imparting essential new information related to the function of the group.

There is a very large number and variety of groups extant in the country at any given time for whom the c.e.u. has potential use. Each of these user groups has its own membership requirements and continuing education objectives. Thus, the opportunity is ever present for the evaluation of continuing education opportunities by these groups. Such judgments are readily capable of being

rendered on the basis of whether or not the particular c.e.u. is pertinent to their immediate need. Very little other judgmental values are involved as contrasted with the detailed procedures for accreditation by peer groups.

Continuous Evaluation and Development of Curricula

Curricula built in terms of c.e.u. are infinitely varied and just as easily capable of updating to serve the changing needs and interests of any user group. Institutional accreditation is not necessary under the separation of interest and function between sponsors and user groups as set forth above. The latter groups are more interested in the offering than the offerer. They may be expected to accept or reject the attendant c.e.u. largely on the basis of whether or not the offering fits their need. The sponsor, meanwhile, can concentrate upon the relatedness of his offering and not be concerned about the structure of an artificial curriculum to which he must either hold or modify to meet a changing circumstance.

Multiple Sponsors Permitted

Therefore, a multiplicity of sponsors is permitted under this scheme. The primary objective of a continuing education offering is to meet the educational goals of an individual or of the particular organization with whom he is affiliated and which sits in judgment of his progress. Ready transferability of records from a multiplicity of sponsors and over time and place barriers are other attributes of the c.e.u. system as conceived and instituted to date.

Sponsor Responsibilities are Few

Meanwhile, the additional burdens imposed upon the sponsor of the continuing education experience are minimal as a consequence of adapting to the c.e.u. mode. The qualifications to become a recognized sponsor of continuing education include: 1) Some form of license, charter or authority to offer continuing education programs, 2) a substantial degree of subject matter expertise, and 3) a commitment to establish and maintain a readily accessable individual record concerning the award of c.e.u.

A by-product of this threshold level of effort is that sponsors of continuing education also achieve a common denominator around which faculties and budgets may be programmed and compared. This may be done not only among various sponsors, but with their formal education counterparts as well.

Experiences to Date

Pilot projects have been carried out over the past year by the extension arms of a number of major educational institutions in terms of awarding c.e.u. and establishing individual records as required by item 3), immediately above. The extra burden of this additional service or dimension to continuing education has been generally acceptable to these institutions even when measured against the limited objectives achieved to date in the absence of user interest in and acceptance of the c.e.u. concept. The module has to come into common usage before recognition programs can evolve. We are at that stage now.

More User Acceptance Needed

Thus, greater user awareness is needed at this time to create a demand for the award and recognition of c.e.u. These indiciations of user acceptance should be encouraged to match more closely the interest and effort of sponsors who offer their continuing education programs to the public with greater or lesser degrees of entrepreneurship.

This latter effort of developing an effective mechanism of demand among potential users of c.e.u. can be brought about more quickly if members of the educational community help such groups set goals and achievement standards that are appropriate for their respective memberships. Unfortunately, there have been no resources available to date for such purposes comparable to the largely voluntary effort that has been expended by the task force upon a number of potential sponsors of continuing education to make their offerings available in the c.e.u. mode.

Given assurance of the continued existence of the basic and universal module of the c.e.u. as described in the opening paragraph, the time is now at hand for the sponsors of continuing education to encourage the unit's adoption among potential user groups. Each sponsor can do this easily and naturally enough by offering to assist user groups he serves in establishing such educational parameters as:

1. Appropriate content, level and formats of instruction for the particular group.

2. Evaluation measures applicable to individual performance, whether in terms of improved skill or proficiency in the field or in terms of evidence of changed behavior.

3. Meaningful rates of accumulation and total number of c.e.u. to be acquired over a stated period of time by each user group for purposes of recognition being conferred upon various of its members.

It is apparent that these several standards will vary to either side of given norms according to the needs of the user group. Organ transplantation techniques for surgeons differ from the educational requirements for park and recreational program directors. However, both user groups measure the educational content of their respective learning experiences in c.e.u. and may receive them from the same or differing sources of sponsorship.

The sponsors of continuing education have a traditional role to fill in assisting with the establishment of the educational parameters for user group programs that base significant aspects of the individual qualification for recognition solely in terms of the accumulation of c.e.u. That is to say, an individual record built almost entirely upon the basis of c.e.u. nevertheless must have some respectability and status within the eyes of academia. If this cannot be, then a large number of us are following careers that are essentially without meaning. And worse than that, we appear to be deceiving the very clientele groups we claim to serve with our efforts and through whom we make our living.

However, the sponsor of continuing education would not expect to make every determination concerning the career development needs of the great many user groups they serve on a year-to-year basis. The level of demand and the changing pattern of need are so very great that no institution or its personnel can rightfully expect to stay abreast of all such requirements. Neither the institution nor its faculty can expect to be the purveyor of all of the requisite learning experiences and self-development requirements imposed upon the individual for advancement within his chosen field of endeavor.

Alternatives Unsatisfactory

The alternatives to the c.e.u. are either to continue to do little or nothing at all for clientele groups in most instances or to create highly individualized and localized program of recognition. The first alternative suggested above begs the question. The second almost certainly leads to programs that are not transferable, accumulative, or capable of ready comparison with similar programs in the same or closely related fields. More than 40 of the latter distinct types of institutionalized programs have been identified nationally by the task force. The systems of measurement and recognition

applied to continuing education by these programs are based upon such diverse elements as "points," "institutional endorsements," "professional credit," "certificate programs," "certificate credit," etc. Each of these exist as a separate star in the firmament, but we still lack the means, as it were to journey from one to another.

The further proliferation of these sundry concepts merely to include the new terminology of "continuing education units" is no answer to the several administrative problems of sole source limitation, transferability, variability of experiences required, need for periodic updating, potential multiplicity of sponsors to include those outside of academia, the basing of recognition on self-development factors other than continuing education, all levels of post-secondary education, etc.

An answer to the vexing but not insurmountable problems does present itself, however, through the concept of a continuing education unit. All that is needed is that it be maintained sufficiently broad in its interpretation and use to fit all of these variable circumstances.

Closure

It is particularly significant and important that each user group sit in judgment as to the usefulness of the c.e.u. in every instance of its application for future recognition purposes. It is in this way that all of the special purpose programs and definitions in continuing education alluded to above can be served by this single simple, modular concept of c.e.u. In short, this is the greatest potential of the highly universal c.e.u.

The sponsor concerns himself mainly with the content and the manner of presentation of the learning experience. The user groups concern themselves with the manner in which particular offering serves the continuing education needs of their respective constituencies. Naturally, all offerings do not serve all groups. It is just that simple and straightforward.

It is time now to get on with applications of the c.e.u. that are built upon user aspirations and lead to meaningful programs of recognition that are equally acceptable to sponsors, users and society in general. The c.e.u. is the new tether that binds the universe. All man is now free to travel wherever he will by virtue of its universal existence and utility.

RECOMMENDATION: ESTABLISH A CREDIT NORM FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Aid to the Selection Process

By Paul J. Grogan

Background

A National Planning Conference was convened in Washington, D.C., July 1 and 2, 1968, for purposes of determining the feasibility of establishing a uniform unit for measuring individual participation in noncredit continuing education. The American Society for Personnel Administration was represented at the conference in the person of Mr. Leonard R. Brice, Executive Vice President.

Mr. Brice since has served on the national task force authorized by the larger planning group to engage in further study and design of the uniform measurement for noncredit continuing education. The following information synopsizes the deliberations of that task force resulting from a series of eight meetings over a period of two years.

Problem Statement

Available knowledge is thought by many to double in no more than 11 years. This phenomenon requires our continuing education programs to determine and maintain skills and awareness to an ever changing frame of reference.

We see increasing signs today of institutions, organizations and individuals seeking to "formalize" informal education as a device for making the pursuit of new knowledge ever more attractive to specific audiences or professional groups. Approximately 35 institutional and organizational programs have been identified from Boston to Oregon and from California to Florida as well as from Kansas, Utah and Wisconsin, in which one aspect or another of recognition is given to individual effort in continuing education.

"Recommendation: Establish a Credit Norm for Continuing Education" appeared in the Personnel Administrator, September-October, 1970 issue, pages 23-24. (Reprinted by permission of the American Society for Personnel Administration.)

Specifics

The several objectives of this proposal are contained in no more than seven consecutive steps. These seven steps represent the simple and orderly adaptations that institutions and society at large need to make to one degree or another to facilitate the establishment of a uniform national system for the measurement and recognition is given to individual participation in noncredit continuing education.

Step 1 (Continuing Education Defined) To identify and refer consistently to all significant learning experiences of post-secondary level, and for which degree credit is not earned, as continuing education. This definition is intended to encompass the great wealth and diversity of educational opportunities referred to variously at present as noncredit course, extension activity, evening division offering, off-campus instruction, certificate program, etc. Continuing education then becomes a part of the totality of education, along with elementary, secondary, technical-vocational, undergraduate, graduate and continuing education. Each of these principal categories of education lends itself to further classification as in the examples of sub-professional, the use of the innocuous terminology of "non-professional and general adult education representing subsets of continuing education.

Step 2 (Continuing Education Unit Recognized) To refer to learning activities under the definition of continuing education in terms of continuing education units (know variously as "c.e. units," "c.e.u" or, simply, "q"), thereby minimizing "credit" while also avoiding giving offense to the guardians of "credit" inasmuch as that nomenclature is intended to apply almost exclusively to formal learning activities that traditionally culminate in a diploma or a degree and for which the continuing education unit is not intended to apply.

Step 3 (Continuing Education Unit Defined) To define the continuing education unit as 10 individual or contact hours of participation in an organized educational activity in which the sponsor, course content, format, and person in responsible charge of the learning experience are clearly identified as the minimum criteria essential to establishing the validity of the continuing education unit. (This unit of measure compares favorably in terms of its contact hour requirements with the quarter credit that is already established as a significant and acceptable threshold level of learning effort by an individual.) The continuing education unit has the further advantage of being computed directly and simply for all formats and durations in the programming of

continuing education wherever student contact hours can be determined. Any other common measure of student effort, whether formal or informal in nature, also may be readily converted into equivalent c.e.u. (or, simply, q) because of the decimal nature of the latter unit.

Step 4 (Wide Adoption Encouraged) To encourage professional societies, certificating agencies, placement activities, employers, personnel managers, counsellors, licensing boards, etc., to establish standards and incentives for personal and professional development in terms of c.e.u. to be acquired over a given period of time. These standards, in effect, serve the purposes of accreditation. The suggestion that recognition be external to educational institutions should help ward off the specter of "diploma mills" coming into existence as a result of these developments, whether in the form of university extension-type operations or simply being labelled as such because of their offering either degrees or credits that are neither in the eyes of academe. The proposed system also permits, indeed encourages, the typical individual to marshal and utilize a host of continuing education resources to serve his particular needs in the form of in-plant courses, association programs, use of proprietary schools and organization, and the blending of a greater number and variety of educational institutional programs in meeting a particular career objective.

Step 5 (Standardized Descriptions Encouraged) To describe all continuing education activities in terms of audience, purpose, format, content, prerequisites, qualifying requirements, duration, etc., so that intelligent judgments can be made by others at removed locations and at later times as to what the educational experience amounted to in terms of new learning acquired by the individual participant. These abstracts should be maintained indefinitely in the permanent records of the sponsor of every bona fide continuing education learning experience for purposes of satisfying inquiries about individuals who have taken part in such learning exercises.

Step 6 (Transfer of Records Facilitated) To establish a machine readable and transferable individual record for all continuing education students served by the particular sponsor. These records are to be maintained throughout time in terms of the Social Security numbers and the learning experience (See Item 5) in which each individual learner participates. This machine record should be readily transferable to any inquirer (See Item 4) who wishes to recognize or otherwise reward the individual for persistence and excellence in the pursuit of continuing education.

Step 7 (Performance Evaluation Maintained Optional) To exercise the option among sponsors of continuing education programs of maintaining performance records by persons in continuing education according to any of three readily convenient and traditional grading system (a) auditor or observer (designated as X), for virtually passive participation, as in a lecture or demonstration; (b) satisfactory or unsatisfactory (S or U), applicable to the majority of continuing education programs where good attendance at sessions, participation in discussion, and the filing of a simple course appraisal form are sufficient to qualify the student for the satisfactory mark; and (c) conventional letter or numerical grades (as in A through F) where typical academic credit instruction standards are maintained in terms of attendance, recitation, outside reading and problem assignments, and the periodic and final evaluation of individual performance by examination.

Summary

Thus, the proposed system neither adds to nor detracts from the present system of continuing education in its simplicity and its appeal. It is expected, however, that the more meaningful forms of professional recognition built upon participation in continuing education each will carry its own stipulation as to how individual performance is to be evaluated. For example, proficiency or equivalency examinations may come into being, sector by sector, to remove all doubt whatsoever about the status the individual has obtained through continuing education and demonstrated by examination.

Paul J. Grogan is professor of engineering, University Extension, The University of Wisconsin. He was one of the initiators of the effort that led to the National Planning Conference on the Continuing Education Unit and has served these past two years as vice chairman of the National Task Force whose work is detailed here. Mr. Grogan first became interested in ASPA's drive toward some national system for recognizing the informal education background of personnel administrators when he served from 1966-1968 as Director, Office of State Technical Services, U.S. Department of Commerce. It was during that period that he published in THE PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR, March-April, 1967, pps. 1-7, under the title, "Professionalism--Continuing Education is the Answer." Mr. Grogan has published over 100 times in like vein in more than 40 journals and education formats both here and abroad.

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

A Uniform Unit of Measurement for
Non-Credit Continuing Education Programs

An Interim Statement of

THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE

to Study the Feasibility and Implementation of a
Uniform Unit for the Measurement of Non-Credit
Continuing Education Programs

INTRODUCTION

A national planning conference was called in Washington, D.C., July 1-2, 1968, under the joint sponsorship of the National University Extension Association, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Civil Service Commission, and the U. S. Office of Education. The purpose of this conference was to determine the level of interest a number of associations had in the possibilities of a uniform unit to measure noncredit continuing education. The thirty-four national organizations represented at the conference were known previously to have expressed an interest in one aspect or another of identifying, measuring and recognizing individual effort in continuing education.

The interest and sense of urgency for a concerted national movement expressed at this meeting resulted in the creation of a National Task Force to determine the feasibility of a uniform unit of measurement and to develop a proposal for field testing and gaining general acceptance of this concept. The organization represented at the 1968 meeting and the members of the Task Force appointed by that assembly are listed at the end of this report.

The impetus for a uniform unit to measure continuing education has developed as a result of the geometric increase in knowledge and the resulting decrease in the half-life of learning--now estimated to be from five to eight years--which individuals acquire during their years in formal education. The resulting demand for refresher and retreading activities is reflected in the constant increase in participation in continuing education and also in the number of institutions and organizations offering programs of this kind.

Several organizations and institutions have initiated or are studying a system of measurement and awards, each having little or no relationship to any other system in being. A uniform nationally accepted unit holds promise of reducing the confusion and fragmentation in arriving at a suitable means of recognizing and rewarding individual effort in the pursuit of continuing education.

This report is the result of deliberations of the National Task Force over a period of almost two years and is presented as an interim statement. Reactions are requested from those who use the recommendations herein in pilot programs as well as from those who have an opportunity to review the report. Such reactions are needed and will be given serious consideration by the Task Force prior to submitting a final report to the National Planning Committee. These should be sent to the Chairman, to the staff assistant or to any member of the Task Force. (See attached list of Task Force members.)

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

Definition

The continuing education unit is defined as follows: Ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.

Continuing education, for the purpose of this recommendation, includes all institutional and organizational learning experiences in organized formats that impart noncredit education to post secondary level learners. These properties of continuing education may be applied equally under the proposed system regardless of the teaching-learning format, program duration, source of sponsorship, subject matter, level, audience, or purpose.

Purpose and Objectives

The continuing education unit, or c.e. unit, may be used for the measurement, recording, reporting, accumulation, transfer and recognition of participation by adults in programs which in the past have seldom been recorded in a formal, systematic way. The unit can be applied with equal facility to professional continuing education, vocational retraining, adult liberal education and all other programs in adult and continuing education.

The individual adult student must be able to accumulate, update, and transfer his record on continuing education throughout life as he faces a succession of hurdles with respect to maintaining or increasing proficiency in his career or in making progress toward his personal educational goals. Through the absence of such a universally recognized unit the concept of education as a continuous process is often lost. The lack of any cumulative record results in narrowly defined education requirements and short-term goals in most continuing education programs.

The purpose of the c.e. unit is to provide a mechanism by which continuing education activities can be recorded, but it is not anticipated that it need be used to record all individual

participation. The administrative requirements for establishing and maintaining permanent records will determine the selection of programs for which c.e. units will be offered to participating individuals. Even where individual records are not maintained, however, the c.e. unit is useful in quantifying and reporting the total amount of continuing education activity.

The c.e. unit was designed to facilitate communication about continuing education from one person to another, from one institution to another, from employee to employer, and from one time period to another. Some specific objectives which the c.e. unit will fulfill are:

1. To systematize the recording and reporting system for continuing education by establishing a uniform, nationally accepted unit of measurement of participation in noncredit continuing education.

2. To provide a uniform system for accumulating statistical data at local, state and national levels on the total amount of participation in continuing education activities.

3. To permit the accumulating, updating, and transfer of the continuing education record of an individual.

4. To encourage long-range educational goals and a continuing education process of lifelong learning for individuals, for professional groups, and by institutions.

5. To make the pursuit of knowledge more attractive as a way of personal and professional development and provide a framework within which an individual can develop at his desired pace.

6. To permit and encourage the adult student to marshall and utilize a host of continuing education resources to serve his particular needs.

The c.e. unit is intended to serve all interests in continuing education, whether public or private, and whether individual, instructional, institutional, organizational, governmental or societal.

The unit is applicable to the appropriate learning experiences of adults at all levels from post secondary to post doctoral; for all classes of adult learners, whether vocational, technical, professional, managerial or adults bent on personal improvement; and in all formats of teaching and learning known to the field of education.

The unit is expected not only to provide a record for the individual student, but to provide a measure which can be used by the institution to record the amount of its continuing education activity. Thereby, the unit provides information for budget and program planning for future activities. In addition to institutional records, the further accumulation through state or national statistical surveys will provide data which has not been available heretofore due to the very lack of a nationally accepted unit such as this proposal envisages.

Administrative Requirements

The following criteria and standards are essential guidelines in offering continuing education units to individual participants in continuing education activities:

1. The program director requests and receives the approval of the appropriate administrative officer in his institution to award a specified number of continuing education units for a program prior to the time it is offered. Ordinarily this information will be included in the program announcement sent to potential participants.

2. Upon conclusion of the learning experience, the program director should be responsible for certifying that the program has been completed in a satisfactory manner by each individual for whom units are approved, and report appropriate information for each participant to be placed on a permanent record.

3. The institution is responsible for establishing and maintaining a permanent record of all continuing education units awarded. Individual records are to be available on a permanent basis in response to requests. The information to be recorded includes:

a. Name of individual student

b. Social security number of individual student

c. Title of course

d. Course description and comparative level if not inherently clear from title

e. Starting and ending dates of activity

f. Format of program

g. Number of continuing education units awarded

Optional information which may be recorded includes:

a. Evaluation of individual performance if available

b. Name of instructor or course director

c. Personal information about the student, i.e., address, date of birth, educational background, employment, etc.

d. Cooperating sponsor -- company, association, agency or institution

e. Courses may be classified as to type, i.e., professional, liberal education, vocational-technical, job entry, in-service, etc. Indication of level, such as introductory, intermediate, or advanced, might also be useful.

It would be helpful if all continuing education activities could be clearly described in terms of audience, purpose, format, content, duration, teaching staff employed, course or experience prerequisites, other qualifying requirements, and level of instruction so that intelligent judgments can be made by others about the educational experience in terms of new learning acquired by the participants. Such essential information could be maintained in condensed form in the permanent records of the

institution for every continuing education experience to which the c.e. unit applies, thereby making it possible for others to evaluate the courses from distant locations and at later times for their particular educational significance whenever such evaluation is needed.

The system of recording units for continuing education participants may be related to the current system of permanent records in use at the institution. At the discretion of the institution, the c.e. unit may be integrated directly into the present system or parallel system can be maintained.

Suggested Applications

The following suggestions for the possible applications of the continuing education unit are offered for guidance and illustrations and should not be considered as limitations on the situations in which the c.e. unit can be applied. Some possible applications of the unit are:

1. Continuing education intensive courses in technical and professional areas (i.e., for engineers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.)

2. In-service training programs to improve competence in new techniques or technical areas.

3. Courses or classes which may be used in partial fulfillment of certificate or licensing requirements.

4. Programs, sponsored by technical or industrial societies through universities, which are designed to upgrade the performance of members in occupational or technical areas.

5. Liberal education programs for the general public.

6. Paraprofessional or subprofessional training programs.

7. Vocational training programs, either in-service or in preparation for entry positions.

Limitations

The following examples suggest the types of programs which ordinarily would not be awarded continuing education units:

1. Any program carrying academic credit, either secondary or collegiate.

2. Programs leading to high school equivalency certificates or diplomas.

3. Organizational orientation training programs.

4. Short duration programs only casually related to any specific upgrading purpose or goal.

Practical Guidelines

When should c.e. units be offered for adult or continuing education programs? The answers to the following questions will serve as a basis for this determination.

1. Does the program meet the requirements of being an "organized continuing education experience?"

2. Does the program have qualified instruction and direction to assure that the educational objectives will be fulfilled?

3. Will a record of the units awarded be of value to the participants?

The term "organized" in the definition refers to the content of the program rather than merely to the mechanics of the meeting. Thus, a series of disconnected presentations such as a topical conference or a casual lecture series requiring only attendance by the participants may not meet the criteria of being an organized educational experience. On the other hand, programs which are part of a curriculum for paraprofessional or sub-professional positions, or to meet certification, licensing, or other occupational requirements should be on the permanent records of the individual participants.

Determination of Units to be Awarded

The determination of the number of units to be awarded for a particular continuing education experience is the responsibility of the director of extension or continuing education, or the director of training, based on the recommendation of the program director immediately responsible for the activity.

The number of c.e. units awarded will be determined by considering the number of contact hours in a formal learning situation and evaluating any other experiences connected with the program. The decimal system will allow the record to reflect the c.e. units to be awarded, based on contact hours, e.g., 1.5 units, 2.4. units, 3.0 units, etc. The c.e. unit has the advantage of being computed simply for all formats and durations of continuing education programming wherever contact hours or their equivalent can be determined. Reasonable allowances may be made for activities such as required reports, laboratory assignments, field trips, and independent study.

A normal one-week short course usually approximates 30 contact hours of participation and would normally be awarded 3.0 c.e. units. A two-day program seldom involves more than 10 to 12 contact hours and thus would be awarded no more than 1.0 to 1.2 c.e. units whenever the program warrants consideration for recording on the participant's permanent record. A ten-session evening class, meeting for two hours per session, would involve twenty hours of instruction and equate to 2.0 units.

Rationale for the Unit

Several possible variations of the c.e. unit were considered before recommending the concept of this unit of measurement. The ten-hour unit relates reasonably well to several formats and durations of continuing education presently in common usage. All others can be translated into such units with a minimum of confusion. The ten-hour unit also permits the use of the decimal system for partial units if needed.

In suggesting the use of the c.e. unit, there is no attempt being made to change or standardize the methods or format of continuing education activities. Variety is one of the major strengths.

This unit represents a sufficiently small amount of participation in continuing education that it will be possible for an individual to accumulate a substantial number over limited periods of time. The comparatively rapid pace of accumulation of units should provide essential individual incentives and motivation for purposes of fulfilling one's continuing education obligation throughout a 40-year career.

Pilot Projects

Several pilot projects will be initiated to test the tentative recommendations included in this report. The pilot projects will be selected on the basis of diverse programs and interest in using the continuing education unit. Consideration will be given to universities, proprietary educational institutions, business concerns providing substantial programs in continuing education, governmental agencies, involved in upgrading and development of individuals, professional societies, and other organizations providing substantial amounts of noncredit continuing education that qualifies within the criteria and standards given previously in this report.

Each of the selected institutions or organizations will be expected to provide detailed background information for the programs included in the study, to develop and maintain a central system for recording and reporting continuing education units for individual participants, and to provide an evaluation and appraisal to the Task Force to assist in refining the proposed criteria, standards and operational procedures.

Evaluation of Responses

The Task Force is distributing this preliminary report for the purpose of analysis and reaction for adult educators. All such responses, whether from pilot projects or from individuals, will be welcome and will be of particular assistance in providing an appraisal of the reaction of adult educators to the proposed uniform unit.

Copies of "An Interim Statement of the National Task Force" may be obtained from the National University Extension Association, Suite 360, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D. C. 20036

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY EXTENSION ASSOCIATION

The Continuing Education Unit --

Pilot Project Report

(Prepared by Keith Glancy, June 1971. Reproduced in part.)

After two years discussion, the National Task Force agreed on the above definition of a continuing education unit. The members spent many sessions analyzing the problems which might be encountered in the application of the c.e. unit, but it soon became obvious that field testing of the proposed unit would be needed to provide many of the answers.

In May, 1970, the members of the Executive Committee of the Conferences and Institutes Division of the National University Extension Association were asked if they would be interested in participating in a pilot project on the application of the c.e. unit. The response was enthusiastic and most of the members of the committee indicated that their institutions would be willing to participate. With this nucleus and a few others who heard about the pilot project, an orientation meeting involving twenty-one institutions was called in July, 1970, in Washington. Of those institutions represented, fourteen were ultimately able to cooperate in applying the c.e. unit during the 1970-71 school year and submitting reports on those activities to which the units were applied. A summary of the information contained in these reports and reported at the NUEA Annual Conference in Portland in May is attached.

This sampling of over 600 activities involving more than 28,000 individuals provides a fair sample of the major types of continuing education programs offered by universities: classes, intensive courses, workshops and conferences. In addition, a few less universal types were also sampled: correspondence courses, lecture series, and living room seminars.

Applications of the c.e. unit were consistent and uniform for evening classes and for intensive courses. Some inconsistency and minor difficulty were apparent when applying the criteria to conference programs and to the few correspondence courses reported.

Much of this inconsistency must be laid to inadequate orientation of the individuals involved, often not the same person coordinating the pilot project. There was some sentiment to question the assignment of units to "every little event."

The major problem noted in the pilot projects was that of determining individual attendance and thus determining which individuals should be awarded c.e. units. No helpful or practical solutions were forthcoming to solve the problem, but it was generally agreed that there were inherent dangers, especially of diluting the value of the c.e. unit, in awarding units without adequate information about the participation by the individual participants. More emphasis should be placed on "satisfactory completion" of an activity, even though this may entail only attendance at the various sessions.

No single pattern was evident for the development of permanent records at the participating institutions. In some institutions it was difficult to obtain full cooperation of the registrar; in others the problems were resolved. A special effort was made by the University of Missouri-Rolla to develop a computer program. It was placed in operation during the spring of 1971 and offers a model for others wishing to develop computer based records. It is capable of printing out the record of an individual including a brief description of each of the courses on his record. Dean Ed Lorey can supply details on the program and the system.

Except for the permanent records, no serious administrative problems were reported. The social security number caused some difficulty, either in obtaining it from the student or in including it in the permanent records where the present system does not provide for it.

The reactions of students were sampled on an informal basis in most pilot projects, but at the University of New Hampshire Carmita Murphy asked the students to complete a questionnaire reacting to the c.e. unit. Eighty-five percent agreed that "I am interested in having my participation in a noncredit course or program recorded by the c.e. unit system." Excerpts from the comments made by the students are included at the end of the report.

Most participants felt that the c.e. unit had great potential which could only be realized when it was accepted much more widely, especially by industry and by professional and technical societies. We are now selling an idea for which we have not yet created a

demand. While a few participants were cautious and wanted to wait for further results, no one expressed a desire to scrap the idea. The c.e. unit met with general acceptance which can be considered a significant accomplishment since it was applied by people and to people who had a limited opportunity to understand and evaluate the concept.

Excerpts from Pilot Project Evaluation Reports

HOW WAS THE UNIT ACCEPTED IN YOUR INSTITUTION?

It was a rather simple administrative procedure to award units.

Our staff have been most cooperative in trying to determine courses where c.e. units should be awarded.

Recommended that the c.e. unit be awarded when offering a "teaching" course.

Many favorable comments have been made by students in courses where the c.e. unit has been awarded.

The general institutional acceptance can be classified as "indifference."

Excellent by the central administration. Students expressed great interest.

If I had more time to devote to developing enthusiasm. . .

The c.e. units would contribute to the achievement of the continuing education objectives of the university and should be adopted.

The c.e. unit was well accepted. Most felt the concept was necessary and long overdue.

Pilot project was greeted with impressive silence.

WHAT ADMINISTRATIVE OR OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS DID YOU FACE?

Very few.

"One more form to complete," for several staff members.

I would see no difficulty in incorporating the c.e. units awarded into the system.

With planning we have had no particular problems. Our costs to date have been mainly those of printing and filing.

We shall be obliged to change certain aspects of our permanent record keeping.

Lack of interest in taking on additional paperwork.

University off-campus council established procedures. Major problems were monies to get the system into operation and acceptance of keeping the records by the Registrar.

The major operational problem was in acquiring social security numbers.

No problems were encountered in the implementation of a storage and retrieval system. For a large and active file of records the use of a computer system would be required.

The volume is enormous.

The establishment of a computerized record keeping and retrieval system.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE CONTINUED AWARDING OF C.E. UNITS?

I would prefer to see the results of this pilot project before making such a recommendation.

We feel that the c.e. unit system is the best approach suggested so far. The c.e. unit should not be awarded promiscuously but should only be awarded in those programs which are of a "course" format and not to conference type programs.

Depending on the final outcome of the Task Force study.

Undecided.

Very strongly. The c.e. unit is a natural medium of exchange.

Yes. For those activities which meet the criteria of continuing education.

Yes. To all noncredit programs which have a minimum of 10 contact hours.

Yes. To all programs related to professional development or career progression.

We will continue awarding c.e. units. The other campuses will initiate this program next year.

Not in the way we did it. If we continued, it would probably be by developing a new course program for a new audience.

Very strongly recommend continued awarding of c.e. units.

I have grave doubts about doing it for non-credit (vis-a-vis non-degree credit) if the world of academia puts a "strangle hold" on the great flexibility we have today in the area of non-credit programs.

WHAT DEFICIENCIES DID YOU FIND IN THE STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES?

Current procedures are adequate. Individual institutions must have authority to make final decision on number of units awarded.

No particular deficiency. Need of more specific statements as guides to those who are beginning to come into the program and suggestions on operating mechanics.

None at this point.

Instructions are clear.

Each institution must develop its own operational procedures for applying and using c.e. units.

Classifying continuing education by level of a degree program is not realistic.

WHAT ADDITIONAL TESTING OR EVALUATION OF THE UNIT WOULD BE USEFUL?

Some schools will have to plunge ahead and award c.e. units. The idea will gain acceptance only through use.

More institutions need to participate in order to draw any generalizations.

The prime test is going to be a feedback from industry, government, etc., as to how they use these units for personnel records, etc.

I would simply like another year to get this activity going.

The usefulness of the c.e. unit can only be accurately evaluated if it is nationally promulgated.

The test should center on the value of the c.e. unit to the student and to his employer.

Concerned with continuing education for teachers and with companies who present many in-house training programs.

GIVE EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS FOR WHICH C.E. UNITS WERE CONSIDERED BUT NOT AWARDED.

In most cases the committee would agree that if it were not definitely a "course" type program, they should not be awarded.

One-day conferences. Time duration is too short. The volume precludes this administratively.

Large lecture classes in which we do not keep attendance were rejected.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT JUDGMENT OF THE POTENTIAL USEFULNESS OF THE UNIT?

The potential is great. There is a long way to go.

If there was widespread acceptance of this unit, there would be some benefits to its use.

The c.e. unit has great potential value when it is publicized and used widely.

I have hopes that a national system for the recognition of non-credit courses through the use of c.e. units will enhance the value of these courses in the eyes of business, industry, government, and even educators.

Limited potential.

Useful. Let's try it.

I am encountering people throughout the university and industrial community who feel that this approach has a tremendous amount of promise.

Unlimited, providing we stick with a basic framework and not assign c.e. units to every little event.

Useful to the individual who seeks recognition from his profession.

There must be intensive interaction with the professional societies and major industries.

The c.e. unit can be an important factor in the development of more effective continuing education programs throughout the country.

OTHER COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE.

We have not devised a scheme which definitely indicates the true level of the instruction.

Recommend that a coordinators' meeting be held in Washington,D.C., summer or fall, 1971.

Secure professional societies' support for establishing "reward systems" for a cumulative number of c.e. units.

A widespread educational and promotional program of the c.e. unit must be effected if the potential is to be realized to an acceptable degree.

The National Task Force should develop plans for a uniform standard system of machine methods for recording and reporting c.e. units.

The development of the c.e. unit should continue.

Anything like c.e. units being established whereby a student merely registers would dissipate its value. It must represent satisfactory completion.

COMMENTS FROM OTHER SOURCES

The requirement of qualifying by full attendance at all sessions is perhaps the main administrative problem in using the c.e. units with conferences. It is not feasible to take attendance at large

conferences. Clarification of the attendance requirement for conferences is needed.

Some minor criticism was expressed in regard to the use of social security numbers for identification purposes.

I believe NUEA should recommend that Divisions such as Correspondence and Conferences and Institutes attempt to standardize their policies on criteria and record-keeping.

Some special provisions will have to be made for reporting correspondence (independent study) courses. Similarly for instructional hours.

My concern is that the c.e. unit will be widely accepted as a meaningful quantitative measure which in fact will conceal inadvertently a good deal of variation in what the c.e. unit will presume to stand for.

I am far from persuaded there is a real need for any standard non-credit unit among the majority of persons. It is a fair question to ask whether in fact there is a widespread a demand for non-credit credit as the Task Force asserts.

COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS

(Excerpts from Survey Report submitted by Mrs. Murphy, University of New Hampshire)

Program should be retroactive to all non-credit courses.

I believe if you are going to set up a ceu system, give the individual a goal to achieve--better for the individual, better for the school.

. . . good as long as it doesn't cause a drastic rise in tuition.

I believe for the tuition and time involved there should be a credit system for all adult education courses, or any continuing educational courses.

My non-credit courses have had absolutely nothing to do with my profession, so I don't feel any evaluation is called for ... some sort of cumulative record should be kept.

. . . not because someone feels like throwing me some crumbs called ceu's!

I am more interested in course content than I am for any credit if they cannot be transferred to college credits.

I think the idea of c.e. units counting for college credits is a wonderful idea.

ACCREDITATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Grover J. Andrews

The College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recently took significant action to give "first class citizenship" to adult education programs at the higher education level. Meeting in Miami Beach on December 1, 1971, the College Delegate Assembly unanimously adopted an extensively revised standard which will elevate adult education programs (continuing education and extension) to a par with other academic programs on college and university campuses in the South.

The new Standard Nine, Special Activities, deals specifically with adult education, continuing education, extension programs, and in general all non-traditional study programs which may be developed by member colleges and universities.

Gordon W. Sweet, Executive Secretary of the College Commission, sees the standard for adult and continuing education, extension and non-traditional study programs as an example of a new effort on the part of the regional accrediting agencies to "catch-up" and get ahead of the new developments in the field of "higher education" and to offer "positive encouragement and guidelines to institutions that want to respond to constituent needs for public service and professional development programs."

Jack K. Williams, president of Texas A & M University and Chairman of the College Commission, sees the adoption of the new standard as a mandate by the delegates to "encourage the development of such programs and to exert some kind of quality control over them."

Grover J. Andrews is Assistant to the Director, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and director of the Study for the revision of Standard Nine, Special Activities (Non-Traditional Studies). "Accreditation of Adult Education Programs in Higher Education" appeared in the April 1972 edition of Adult Leadership, pages 361-362. (Reprinted by permission of the Adult Education Association of the USA.)

Three years ago the Executive Council of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association authorized a study to determine the status and interest of the 561 member institutions of the Commission in adult and continuing education programs. The study, which took two years to complete consisted of the development of a 55 page survey instrument which was completed and returned by 502 of the member instituions. An analysis of the contents of the study responses revealed extensive activity and interest in nine definable program areas. These areas include external or special degree programs, off-campus classes and units, independent study programs (including correspondence and home study), conferences and institutes including short courses and workshops, foreign travel study, media instruction, and special on-campus programs including evening programs. Many institutions included information on the questionnaire about additional programs in the developmental stage.

As a result of the study, an extensive rewriting of the existing standards was made under the direction of the author and a committee of ten deans and directors of adult education programs representing the various types and sizes of member institutions to provide up-to-date guidelines for member institutions who have or wish to develop adult and continuing education, extension, and non-traditional study programs.

The new standard "seeks to encourage motivation and an imaginative approach" by the college or university in providing "quality instruction" to its various constituents in special programs. Specifically the standard provides a set of illustrations or guidelines by which an institution may develop its program. The guidelines in the new standard set forth specific criteria for (1) administration and organization, (2) finance, (3) faculty, (4) students, (5) operationally separate units (degree granting), (6) external or special degree programs (non-traditional study), (7) off-campus classes and units, (8) independent study, (9) conferences and institutes, (10) media instruction, (11) foreign travel and study, and (12) special on-campus programs. The illustrations for accreditation are broad based and are largely administrative in nature which enables them to be applicable to any discipline or professional field within any institution.

The standard also includes a new uniform measure for non-credit courses and programs. The continuing education unit (c.e.u.) which is defined as "10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education (adult or extension) experience

under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction" was adopted as the unit of measure. The c.e.u. is the product of a national Task Force of educators under the direction of William L. Turner, former dean of university extension at North Carolina State University at Raleigh, now director of administration of state government in North Carolina. By including the c.e. unit in the new standard the College Commission is requiring the member institutions to use the unit as a record-keeping measure for all non-credit activities of an individual and the institution. A handbook on the full use of the c.e. unit including evaluation of a student's non-credit work and faculty participation in non-credit work is currently being developed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Task Force and should be in print by fall of 1972.

While the new standard provides the way for institutions to develop most types of adult and continuing education and non-traditional study programs, it has also provided for quality control within each of the program areas by outlining proper administrative procedures and organization, a sound financial base, adequate facilities, and a qualified faculty. The amount of credits or c.e. units to be granted for a course or program is regulated just as credits for regular on-campus courses are monitored. The standard also specifies that all non-traditional programs "must be compatible with the educational program and objective of the total institution" and that all such programs will be a part of the total evaluation of an institution for accreditation.

Just as the Southern Association has made a study of its position on adult and continuing education programs at the higher education level, and brought about changes in the standards relevant to the needs of today, so should the colleges and universities review their position and programs in these areas. The ever increasing interest in non-traditional education programs designed specifically for public and community service needs calls for action by the established institutions. The new standard of the College Commission of the Southern Association opens the way for institutions to respond to the public demand for new and innovative ways to learning.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL TASK FORCE

On a Uniform Unit of Measurement for Noncredit Continuing Education Programs

Chairman - William L. Turner, North Carolina Department of Administration, P.O. Box 1351, Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

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APPENDIX B

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Participating Organizations in the National Planning Conference
Conducted in Washington, D.C., July 1 and 2, 1968

Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Junior Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Society of Engineers
American Society for Personnel Administration
AFL-CIO
American Hospital Association
American Medical Association
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society for Public Administration
Association of University Evening Colleges
Cambridge Institute for Management Education
U.S. Civil Service Commission
Commission on Engineering Education
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
U.S. Department of the Air Force, DOD
E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company, Inc.
Engineers Council for Professional Development
Engineers Joint Council
General Learning Corporation
McGraw-Hill, Inc.
National Academy of Engineers
National Home Study Council
National Society of Professional Engineers
National University Extension Association
Office of Emergency Planning, Executive Offices of the President
Science Research Associates
United Auto Workers
United States Armed Forces Institutes
U.S. Office of Education

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